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Subject: Comments

From: Ed White <ewhite@gci.net>

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I would like to submit the following comments on the draft 2006-2008 STIP:

I appreciate the new format the draft STIP was released in. It is easier to read, and the photos add helpful information. However, I was concerned about several projects that seem to have been dropped or delayed in the draft STIP. It appears several safety and road improvement projects have been delayed, while new bridge and road projects are given priority. Projects that improve safety, such as the Sunny Point intersection, should be developed before new roads, such as the Juneau Access road are built. I have seen two accidents at this intersection since the draft STIP was released.

The marine highway terminal improvements included in the draft STIP will help with ferry operations, but I did not see the Prince Rupert Shuttle or a new mainline ferry listed. Several existing ferries are in need of major overhauls or replacement in the next few years. I'm concerned that the Juneau Access and the Gravina Island bridge projects will draw much needed resources from upgrading and improving marine highway access. I believe that improved ferry access into and out of Ketchikan, along with improving ferry service frequency and capacity to Gravina Island would have a greater beneficial economic impact than a bridge located far south of the airport and downtown. I also believe the funds for the Juneau Access project would be better spent increasing ferry service in Lynn Canal and the north panhandle. Increased and more efficient ferry service could help economic development and increase the number of independent travelers visiting this part of Alaska.

Several other Southeast projects need a greater priority. The Port St Nicholas road improvements should be completed as soon as possible. The current condition of the road is limiting growth in the Craig area. South Mitkof road improvements should be completed as soon as possible to accommodate increased traffic that the new IFA ferry will bring.

Thank you for your time,

Ed White